

THE MILITANT

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Havana meeting honors 'The best fighter in revolutionary Cuba's air force'
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE VOL. 72/NO. 22 JUNE 2, 2008

China: unsafe construction compounded toll of quake

BY DOUG NELSON

May 20—The final death toll from the May 12 massive earthquake that hit China's Sichuan province will surpass 50,000, ranking it among the world's 20 most deadly earthquakes on record. News reports point to the poor structural quality of many residences, schools, and other buildings as the major reason for the high number of fatalities.

The Chinese government has so far confirmed more than 40,000 dead, 32,000 missing, and 247,000 injured. An estimated 4.8 million people have been left homeless.

More than 250,000 people died the last time an earthquake of a similar magnitude occurred in China. The inadequate response of the Chinese government following that 1976 quake in Tangshan, which included refusing international food aid and help with the rescue effort, increased the number of unnecessary casualties.

Since the 1976 earthquake, the government has enacted stricter construction standards. However, reports of the damage from the current earthquake disaster reveal that many buildings col-

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Eleven-month union battle at Dakota marks new contract

BY ERNEST MAILHOT

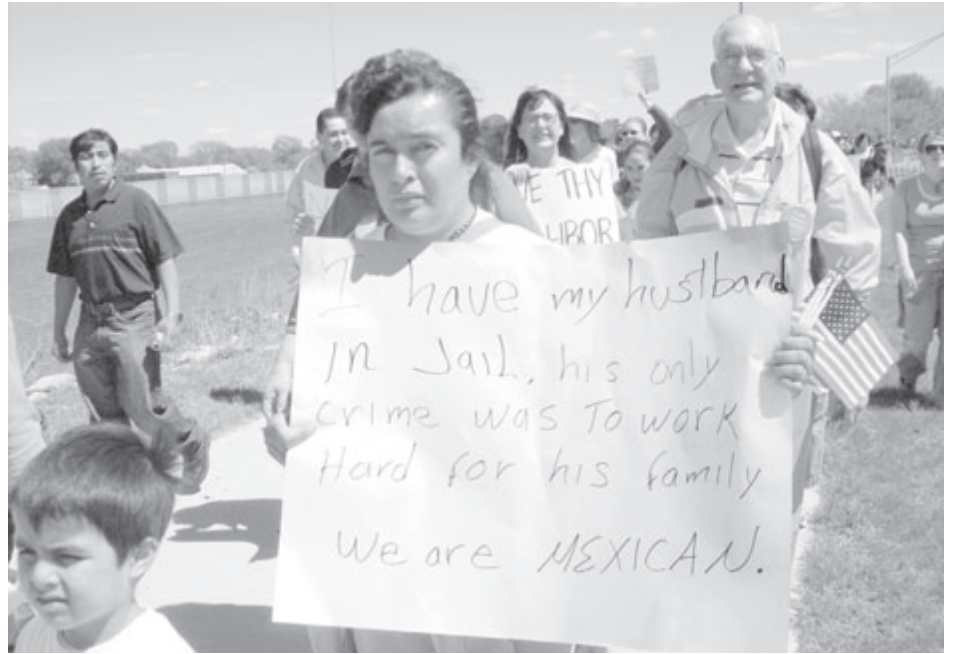
SOUTH ST. PAUL, Minnesota—Workers at Dakota Premium Foods, by a 94 to 51 vote, approved a contract May 14 registering gains for the 250 workers at the meatpacking plant. The members of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 789 had a week earlier rejected a previous contract offer.

The new agreement runs through July 2011. The workers will receive a lump sum from a 40-cents-per-hour pay raise dating back to July 2007, when the previous contract expired. There will be another raise of 40 cents per hour this year, with hourly raises of 35 cents per hour for each of the next three years. For many months Dakota management insisted raises could not be much more than its original offer of 15 cents per hour with a 10-cents-per-hour attendance bonus.

Among the advances made by the workers in the new contract was the right to have union representatives visit the plant three times a month, as opposed to once a month, the previous arrangement. The contract also included some improvements in how job openings are

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Workers in Iowa march against ICE factory raid



Militant/Jenny Shegos

Sofia, one of the workers arrested and released following the May 12 raid by ICE at Agriprocessors in Postville, Iowa, marches with 400 May 18 in Waterloo, Iowa.

BY SETH GALINSKY

WATERLOO, Iowa, May 18—"I was affected by the raid," Elida told several hundred people gathered at Queen of Peace Catholic Church here, her voice shaking. Elida's husband

has been in jail since the May 12 immigration raid at the Agriprocessors slaughterhouse in nearby Postville.

"We are not criminals," she said. "We just want to work to feed our chil-

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Conference will promote broader activity to free the Cuban Five

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

NEW YORK, May 21—Supporters of the campaign to free the Cuban Five are building participation in a June 14 conference here that will serve as a springboard for stepped-up defense activities throughout the country this fall.

The Cuban Five—Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González, René González, Gerardo Hernández, and Ramón Labañino—have been locked up in U.S. prisons since 1998, serving long sentences on false charges because of their actions in defense of Cuba.

The conference will be held at Hostos Community College in the Bronx. Activists are coming from New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and other states.

The program includes seven work-

shops on how to broaden support for the defense campaign among students and youth; religious groups; labor; Black, Puerto Rican, and other community organizations; academics; artists, musicians, and writers; and civil libertarians and attorneys.

A morning plenary session will be addressed by Leonard Weinglass, part of the Cuban Five legal team, and by a representative of the Cuban mission to the United Nations. Workshops and plenary session discussions will focus on plans for action in the coming months.

One of the main campaigns is a stepped-up effort to win visas for Adriana Pérez and Olga Salanueva, who have been repeatedly denied entry by U.S. authorities to visit their husbands, Gerardo Hernández and René González. Proposals will also include an East Coast demonstration in September—the 10th

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Welcome to our new readers!

BY PAUL PEDERSON

With this issue we welcome the more than 2,500 people who subscribed to the paper during the just-concluded eight-week subscription campaign. Nearly

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Militant/Jenny Shegos

SWP vice presidential candidate Alyson Kennedy at May 18 protest in Waterloo, Iowa.

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

POSTVILLE, Iowa—Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. vice president, visited this town May 20 to extend solidarity to workers at the Agriprocessors Inc. slaughterhouse, where immigration cops arrested nearly 400 workers May 12.

Outside St. Bridget's Catholic Church, Kennedy talked to an Agriprocessors worker who had been detained and later released by the government. This worker, who asked that the *Militant* not print her name out of fear of retaliation, said she knew of 49

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A note to our readers

In this issue we are running 7 pages in English and 5 pages in Spanish in order to publish in both languages a speech by Cuban Brig. Gen. Arnaldo Tamayo given in February during the Havana Book Fair. We will return to our regular layout, 9 pages in English and 3 pages in Spanish, next week. In the future when we have large features to run, we will do our best to expand the issue to 16 pages.

Family, friends condemn cop killing of Calif. youth

BY NAOMI CRAINE

INGLEWOOD, California—“We ask that justice be done,” said Mildred Daramola at a May 15 vigil of 50 people to protest the police killing of her cousin, Michael Byoune, in this Los Angeles metropolitan area city.

Byoune, 19, was killed early on the morning of May 11 when two cops shot up the vehicle in which he was riding. The driver, Larry White, also 19, was shot in the leg and is still hospitalized. Chris Larkin, 21, was grazed by the bullets. All three youths are Black.

The cops said they were investigating shots fired in the area, saw Larkin run to a car, and claimed the car began driving toward them. They said they heard more shots and immediately opened fire on the car, at first even shooting through their own windshield. The cops then got out of their car and continued firing.

Relatives said the men had gone out for hamburgers, heard some shots, and

were trying to leave when the cops attacked them.

Inglewood police chief Jacqueline Seabrooks called the events “tragic,” but said, “I won’t go so far as to call it a mistake.” But according to the *Los Angeles Times* Seabrooks said there was no indication that the cops fired warning shots or that they saw any weapons. The cops are currently on paid leave.

“What they did was wrong,” said White in a message read at the vigil by his brother. “They changed my life and took my best friend.”

“They killed him for no reason,” said Eboni Childs, another friend of Byoune. “The officers that killed him need to be arrested, like anyone else.”

James Harris, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress in the 35th C.D., took part in the vigil. “We should demand the prosecution and jailing of the cops who killed Michael Byoune,” he said.



Mildred Daramola denounces the police killing of her cousin Michael Byoune, at May 15 vigil in Inglewood, California. To her right, in dress, is Byoune’s mother, Jackie Roberts.

THE MILITANT

Prosecute and jail the killer cops!

From New York City to Inglewood, California, working people are demanding a halt to the daily brutality the cops mete out with impunity. Keep up with this fight by subscribing to the ‘Militant.’



New York protest against police killing of Sean Bell in 2006.

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New Jersey socialists wrap up ballot drive



Militant/Carole Lesnick

NEWARK, New Jersey, May 18—During a 12-day effort by supporters of the Socialist Workers campaign, more than 1,600 people signed petitions to place on the ballot Sara Lobman (shown petitioning above), the SWP candidate for U.S. Senate, and Róger Calero and Alyson Kennedy, SWP candidates for U.S. president and vice president. Another 250 signed for Michael Taber, the SWP candidate for Congress in the 10th C.D. In all cases petitioners collected more than double the requirement.

—AMY HUSK

‘Militant’ names business manager

BY CINDY JAQUITH

The *Militant* has named Angel Lariscy business manager. Prior to taking on this responsibility, Lariscy, 43, worked as a sewing machine operator in Elizabeth, New Jersey, and was a member of UNITE HERE Local 169.

Lariscy is in charge of subscriptions, bundle orders, and invoices for the paper and can be reached by e-mail at themilitant.business@mac.com. She is also the Spring 2008 Militant Fund director. Reports on the fund should be directed to her at the same e-mail address.

Readers will notice that we initiated a change in the paper’s Spanish section last week. We are now printing the articles and charts on the spring subscription drive and on the fund in the pages of *El Militante* as well as in the

Militant. Our Spanish-speaking readers are enthusiastic promoters of the socialist press. This step enables them to follow more closely the progress of both campaigns.



Militant/Carole Lesnick

Angel Lariscy selling the *Militant* in Camden, New Jersey, in 2005, when she ran for governor of New Jersey on the Socialist Workers ticket.

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Editor: Olympia Newton

Managing Editor: Cindy Jaquith

Business Manager: Angel Lariscy

Washington correspondent: Sam Manuel

Editorial volunteers: Róger Calero, Ved Dookhun, Martín Koppel, Paul Pederson, Doug Nelson, Ben O’Shaughnessy

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Fax: (212) 244-4947

E-mail: themilitant@mac.com

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Pacific Islands: Send NZ\$50 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand.

Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the Militant’s views. These are expressed in editorials.

Iowa workers talk about raid, plant conditions

BY SETH GALINSKY

POSTVILLE, Iowa—"It was a human-hunt," said one woman at the trailer park near the Agriprocessors meatpacking plant here. Referring to the immigration raid at the plant two days earlier, she told the *Militant* that "they surrounded the plant and used helicopters. What they did was criminal." Her son, an undocumented worker from Mexico, was arrested during the raid.

The U.S. government has brought criminal charges against 306 out of 389 workers arrested. Charges include: "misuse of Social Security number," "aggravated identity theft," and "possession of counterfeit identification."

The May 12 raid was the biggest single-site immigration roundup in U.S. history. Agriprocessors is the largest kosher slaughterhouse in the country.

Sixty-two workers have been released on "humanitarian grounds," such as having minor children. They must wear electronic ankle bracelets and are not allowed to leave the state while awaiting a court hearing.

The woman whose son was arrested had worked at the plant until a couple of weeks ago. She described the conditions there. Shifts of 12 or more hours a day were the norm, she said.

Starting wages were only recently raised to \$7.25, and workers said that the highest wage for Latino production workers was \$7.75 per hour, \$5 per hour less than most packing plants in Iowa. Other employees were given the easiest jobs, more breaks, and were paid substantially more than Latino workers, who are mostly from Mexico or Guatemala.

At nearby St. Bridget's Catholic Church, the hundreds of men, women, and children who sought refuge during the raid were still there two days later. By May 16, most had left the church, after fears of another roundup by ICE eased. Most of those at the church were second-shift workers, who stayed away from the plant during the first-shift raid. Others had successfully hidden or escaped during the raid, in some cases with the help of coworkers who are U.S. citizens.

—CALENDAR—

UNITED KINGDOM London

The Cuban Revolution Today. Thurs., May 29. Speaker: Teresita Trujillo, representative of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba. Thurs., 7:30 p.m. *University of London Union, Malet St., Room 3D. Sponsors include: Jeremy Corbyn (MP), Andy de la Tour, Communist Party of Britain, Communist League, Young Socialists, Movimiento Ecuador en el Unido, Larry Herman.*

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

FLORIDA

Miami

War and Crisis in the Middle East: A Working-Class Perspective. Speaker: Deborah Liatos. Fri., May 30. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 8365 NE 2nd Ave., 2nd Floor. Tel: (305) 756-4436.

Volunteers from many churches in the region provided three free meals a day to the raid refugees, along with toiletries and some clothing.

Although still in a state of shock because of the scope of the raid, many of the workers at the church wanted to talk about the horrendous conditions in the plant.

"Many people lost fingers and hands," one worker said. "The line was so fast."

"My job was to twist the necks of 100 chickens a minute," said another worker.

Several said that the company fired workers with on-the-job injuries when they could no longer work on the production line.

When workers asked for pay raises the supervisors told them if they didn't like it, "there's the door."

According to several workers interviewed, one of the bosses from Agriprocessors came by the church the day after the raid and asked employees to come back to work for \$14 per hour.

According to the *Waterloo Courier*, 200 workers briefly walked off the job a year ago when the company announced it had received "no-match" letters from the Social Security Administration, alleging that some Agriprocessors employees did not have proper work documents. The United Food and Commercial Workers union publicized the walkout at the time.

At a convenience store and gas station on the outskirts of town, frequented by many area farmers, the cashier said, "To be honest, the raid sucks. They're just tearing apart families for no good reason."

In what the *Des Moines Register* termed an "unusual agreement," federal authorities will allow detained workers who are not criminally charged to stay in Iowa for several more months. After the December 2006 raid at Swift & Co., which included the plant in Marshalltown, Iowa, immigrants who were arrested were rapidly shipped out to detention centers around the country and deprived of the ability to meet with their lawyers or see their families.

A lawsuit filed May 15 by lawyers for three of the detained workers



Militant/Jenny Shegos

May 18 march in Waterloo, Iowa, against immigration raid at Agriprocessors Inc.

charged the U.S. government with violating Fifth Amendment due process rights by imposing "prolonged and indefinite detention" and hampering access to lawyers. The law-

suit also charges that Agriprocessors withheld pay for "immigration fees," denied compensation for overtime, and refused to let employees use the restroom during work shifts.

Earthquake toll in China

Continued from front page

lapsed because they were not built or upgraded to these codes.

Working-class dwellings and schools were the hardest hit. A higher percentage of buildings collapsed in smaller towns and rural areas than in large cities. According to Chinese engineers quoted in the press, building code violations are particularly common in these more rural areas.

Residents of Mianzhu, who were searching for relatives in a fallen apartment complex, told *The Independent* that the buildings had been built in a substandard manner because corrupt government officials had siphoned off so much in kickbacks during the construction. "Show me the structural steel in that building," said one woman whose mother was trapped under debris. "It all went into some official's pocket." Buildings surrounding the working-class complex remained intact, *The Independent* reported, "including one which housed cadres from the Communist Party."

Xinhua, China's state news agency, estimates 4 million buildings were destroyed, including 6,900 classrooms and school dormitories. The quake occurred at 2:30 p.m., when school was in session. In the city of Mianyang, seven school buildings collapsed, burying 1,700 people.

A school collapse in Dujiangyan bur-

ied 900 students. The Fu Xing No. 2 school in the village of Wufu collapsed, killing 300. Nearly all the other buildings in the village remained intact.

"My daughter wasn't killed by a natural disaster. She and the others were killed by a derelict building," said Bi Kaiwei, whose 13-year-old daughter was buried under the school in Wufu. "The officials knew it was unsafe."

Bi and the child's mother, Lin Xiaoying, are chemical factory workers. Their apartment across the street, built in 1982, was older than the school, but stood undamaged. China's reactionary "one-child policy," which prohibits most parents from having more than one child, meant that the couple, like many other working-class parents of victims, lost their only child.

So far, 7,000 aftershocks have occurred in southwest China, increasing fears of further disaster, including landslides and bursting dams. The widespread substandard construction in China mirrors the government's attitude toward the safety of working people on the job. Health and safety have both been a casualty of the capitalist market methods increasingly applied in the last two decades by China's privileged government bureaucracy. Deaths from work-related accidents last year totaled nearly 100,000 workers, according to China's safety agency.

Workers in Iowa protest ICE factory raid

Continued from front page

dren." She demanded the government "return my husband to me and free the rest of those who have been arrested."

"To my fellow Latinos I say, we must keep fighting until we win."

The meeting at the church included immigrant rights activists, religious leaders, trade unionists, and other workers. Mark Lauritsen, an international vice president of the United Food and Commercial Workers union, was present. Following the meeting, more than 400 people marched two-and-a-half miles to the Cattle Congress fairgrounds, where many of those detained in the May 12 raid had been held. While the workers have now been sent to other prisons around the state, agents of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) are still operating out of the grounds.

The spirited march was led by Agriprocessors workers from Postville and their children. Several of the women who marched were wearing GPS ankle bracelets required as a condition of their release by ICE after being arrested during the raid at the meatpacking plant.

A busload from Marshalltown, Iowa, was organized by Latinos en Acción de CCI (Latinos in Action of CCI), an affiliate of the Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement. The bus included many meatpacking workers from Swift & Co., which was raided by ICE in December 2006, as well as students from Marshalltown Community College and construction workers.

A vanload of workers and students came from the Twin Cities in Minnesota. Several nuns, priests, and ministers also joined the march.

There were many U.S.-born workers—white and Black—from Waterloo and other towns in northeast Iowa.

Oscar Gomez, a 15-year-old high school student from Waterloo, said he joined the march because "one of my uncles was arrested by ICE. He has five kids and a wife and she doesn't know how she can pay the bills."

"It's messed up," Gomez said. "This just breaks families apart." For three nights in a row he joined the protests outside the Cattle Congress.

Michelle, a Black worker on the Tyson meatpacking plant cleaning crew in Waterloo, also joined the march. "They're doing the same thing to immigrants that they did to Blacks," she said.

Natalie Morrison contributed to this article.

EDITORIAL

For a sliding scale of hours, wages

From truck drivers in the United States to toilers in semicolonial countries from Haiti to Bangladesh, working people are seeking ways to protect ourselves from the grind of the spreading capitalist crisis with its ruinous inflation and devastating unemployment.

An effective demand that can unite working people today is a *sliding scale of wages and hours*. There should be cost-of-living increases in the wages and benefits of all workers so that when the prices of consumer goods go up there is an automatic rise in income to match. And to protect our class against rising unemployment, the work week should be shortened with no cut in pay to spread the available work to all. Millions of jobs can be created at union-scale wages through a massive public works program.

In addition to high prices the capitalist rulers rig their statistics to understate the real cost of food, fuel, health care, housing, and education. In 1997 a panel

appointed by William Clinton recalculated the Consumer Price Index (CPI) to substantially reduce official price figures. Increases in the price of meat, for example, were not taken into account on the basis that workers could substitute hamburger for steak. In a similar fashion, a commission under the John F. Kennedy administration “disappeared” millions of unemployed workers by no longer counting those who had given up on finding a job.

To counter this trickery the unions need to initiate committees of workers and farmers that can take the determination of the CPI into our hands.

To wage this kind of fight working people need a political party of our own—a labor party based on combative trade unions. Such a party can begin to fight now for a sliding scale of wages and hours and other demands in the interests of working people around the world.

Welcome to our new readers

Continued from front page
2,200 of the subscriptions were sold to new readers.

We also congratulate the supporters of the paper around the world who participated in this very successful campaign. Not a single local area that took a quota failed to reach it—in full, and on time.

The *Militant* was particularly marked over the past two months by working-class struggles across the United States in response to factory raids, deportations, and abuse against foreign-born workers by federal and local cops. For the third year running, at mass actions on May Day, thousands took to the streets to demand legalization for all undocumented immigrants.

The *Militant* has been welcomed in Iowa in the aftermath of a May 12 raid in the town of Postville. Nearly 400 workers were arrested—many brought to a detention center and base set up by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement cops in Waterloo.

“One of the most interesting things was how—not everybody—but more people than I expected, were opposed to ICE setting up its detention center in the middle of town,” said Frank Forrestal, a *Militant* supporter in Des Moines, in a phone interview on his way back from Waterloo May 21.

“Taking the paper door-to-door and at the protests, a number of workers who were born in Iowa—white and Black—would often come up and buy the paper and express their disgust at the raid. Many joined the protests,” Forrestal said. Some 25 people in the area subscribed in the week following the raid.

Supporters of the *Militant* threw themselves into the effort to build May Day actions for legalization in their areas. They wrote stories for the paper as the activities were building and won nearly 700 new readers to the paper between April 30 and May 7, the majority at the May Day actions themselves.

Cuban Five

Continued from front page
anniversary of the arrest of the five—as well as a national conference.

Conference participants will also discuss how to take advantage of an array of speakers, literature, petitions, and documentary videos on the case.

Before their arrest, the five—two U.S. citizens and three Cuban immigrants—were gathering information on right-wing Cuban-American groups that have staged violent attacks against Cuba with Washington’s complicity. Arrested by the FBI on Sept. 13, 1998, they were denied bail and kept in solitary confinement for 17 months. The U.S. government falsely charged them with “conspiracy to commit espionage,” “conspiracy to act as an unregistered foreign agent,” and—in the case of Hernández—“conspiracy to commit murder.” Although none of the main charges were proven, they were convicted and given sentences ranging from 15 years to a double life sentence.

The injustice against the five men strikes many who learn the facts of the case as being part of the broader pattern of U.S. government assaults on basic rights. Over the past decade and a half Washington has enacted laws that have expanded mandatory federal prison sentences, reduced protections against arbitrary search and seizure, authorized “preventive detention” without bail on the basis of “secret evidence,” limited the right of appeal, and expanded the use of the death penalty. Through their resistance in face of harsh prison conditions, the Cuban Five have been in the front ranks of those fighting these assaults.

Initial sponsors of the June 14 conference include Casa de las Américas, Cuba Solidarity New York, Popular Education Project to Free the Cuban 5, National Committee to Free the Cuban Five, IFCO/Pastors for Peace, People’s Organization for Progress, Puerto Rican Nationalist Party, ProLibertad, Socialist Workers Party, ANSWER, Venceremos Brigade, Workers World Party, Young Socialists, and San Romero Church.

For more information visit www.freethecuban5conference.com.

‘Militant’ Subscription Drive Spring 2008 ♦ March 22 – May 18 Week 8 of 8			
Country	Quota	Sold	%
UNITED STATES			
Boston	60	64	107%
Miami	130	136	105%
San Francisco*	135	141	104%
Des Moines, IA	140	146	104%
Philadelphia	85	88	104%
Newark, NJ*	175	181	103%
Houston	90	93	103%
Twin Cities	150	154	103%
New York	315	322	102%
Chicago	120	122	102%
Atlanta	130	132	102%
Carrollton, GA	145	147	101%
Seattle	115	116	101%
Washington, D.C.	140	141	101%
Los Angeles*	145	146	101%
Albuquerque, NM	10	10	100%
Other		16	
U.S. Total	2,085	2155	103%
UNITED KINGDOM			
Edinburgh	45	50	111%
London*	80	89	111%
UK Total	125	139	111%
CANADA	105	109	104%
NEW ZEALAND	65	70	108%
AUSTRALIA	55	57	104%
SWEDEN	25	27	108%
Int’l Totals	2,460	2,557	104%
Goals/Should be	2,400	2,400	100%
* increased quota			

Socialist in Iowa

Continued from front page
women and 3 or 4 male workers who were released but are forced to wear ankle bracelets. Kennedy said the socialist campaign favors legalization for all immigrants without conditions.

“In Postville and surrounding towns, the people are divided on the issue of what to do about immigration,” Lyle Otte told Kennedy. Otte is a retired teacher who is helping the families of the arrested workers.

Going door-to-door in a trailer park, Kennedy was introduced to Alicia Vega Ortiz, whose 19-year-old son was rounded up in the May 12 raid. Along with a busload of Agriprocessors workers, Ortiz marched in the Waterloo rally and addressed the crowd, denouncing the arrests.

“People like you are leading the way forward,” said Kennedy. “We can win if we keep fighting to build a movement that demands legalization. There were a good number of people who’ve lived their whole lives in Iowa who joined the protest. There was unity there that we can build on. More and more are seeing the raids as attacks on all of us.”

Fund drive wraps up next week

BY ANGEL LARISCY

With only a few days before the final figures are counted, the \$100,000 Militant Fund is close to a victory with \$99,647 collected.

Supporters of the socialist newsweekly in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and five U.S. cities—Houston, Los Angeles, New York, Twin Cities, and Washington, D.C.—have already met or gone over their goal.

John Clifford, a hotel worker and new member of the Young Socialists in Twin Cities, spoke at a recent meeting on the Militant Fund. He said what was inspiring about the paper was that “it rests on the shoulders of workers and those who donate to get it out. It’s the only media source that consistently presents social, economical, and political issues from a class perspective.”

The final chart for the fund will be run in the next issue of the paper; all money received by Tuesday, May 27, will count. It’s not too late to join the effort. Please send your contribution to the *Militant* at 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

\$100,000 ‘Militant’ Fund Spring 2008 ♦ March 22 – May 18 Final chart will print next week			
Country	Quota	Paid	%
UNITED STATES			
Twin Cities*	5,500	5,820	106%
Los Angeles*	9,500	9,984	105%
Houston	2,500	2,538	102%
New York	15,000	15,187	101%
Washington, D.C.*	4,300	4,345	101%
Des Moines, IA	2,000	1,952	98%
Miami	3,000	2,886	96%
Philadelphia*	3,300	3,170	96%
Newark, NJ	3,700	3,508	95%
Seattle	7,000	6,425	92%
San Francisco*	13,000	11,470	88%
Atlanta	4,000	3,403	85%
Chicago*	8,125	6,910	85%
Carrollton, GA	4,700	3,877	82%
Boston	2,800	2,088	75%
Other		1,500	
U.S. total	88,425	85,063	96%
CANADA*	5,500	6,050	110%
NEW ZEALAND	3,200	3,390	106%
AUSTRALIA*	2,200	2,205	100%
UNITED KINGDOM			
London	1,000	1,038	104%
Edinburgh	600	600	100%
UK total	1,600	1,638	102%
SWEDEN	1,000	1,069	107%
FRANCE	260	232	89%
Goal/Should be	100,000	100,000	100%
Total	102,185	99,647	99%
* increased quota			

11-month union battle

Continued from front page

posted and awarded.

One of the central demands of the workers throughout the contract fight—a line speed at no more than 94 cows per hour, verified by the workers—was not addressed in the new contract. This will remain a focal point of struggle, according to union activists interviewed by the *Militant*.

Company's attempt to take credit

Thirty-five percent of the union members who voted opposed the contract. This registered sentiment among many that the contract fight had put workers in a strong position to win more from the company, including better safety on the job. Most of the workers—both those who voted “no,” and those who voted “yes”—see their accomplishments and consider themselves stronger today for having used their union power to wrest some wage concessions from the company.

Rebecca Williamson, one of several workers who became shop stewards during the contract fight, explained: “The company flyer put out the day of the vote urging workers to ratify the contract says the employer worked hard for 11 months to get us this contract.

“They did work hard, but it was not to give us anything. For the first six months Dakota worked hard to decertify the union. After that they insisted wages could not be raised much. They always refused to talk about the line speed and other safety issues. It's the fight by the workers that got us where we are today and it's this fight that continues.”

The recent struggle to organize a union and win a contract at Dakota Premium goes back to June 2000 when

workers sat in the lunchroom and refused to work until the company slowed down the line. Workers today often refer to the sit-down strike of 2000, called the *plantón* in Spanish. For seven hours workers stood firm against company threats and pressures and won. A few weeks later the workers voted in the UFCW.

The union victory was followed by a two-year-and-a-half fight for a contract, which was won in 2002. During the life of this five-year contract there were constant skirmishes with the company over safety conditions, access to union representation, firings, and other harassment of the workers.

As a result of the sit-down strike in 2000, the workers wrested an agreement that the plant would butcher no more than 94 cows an hour, with a worker verifying the line speed. Workers were not strong enough to maintain that victory in the face of the company's relentless pressure to produce more. Since 2000 the line speed has significantly increased, workers say, with hundreds more cows a day being killed in the same number of hours.

The demand to reestablish a limit on the line speed became very popular as workers tried to figure out how to deal with constant injuries and abuse.

The other central issue was a decent pay raise. Workers were determined to do better than their last contract, which included raises between 20 and 35 cents each year for the union members.

Throughout the 11-month battle for a contract in 2007 and 2008 the Dakota workers have written and distributed an in-plant newsletter called the *Workers' Voice*. The newsletter is popular among workers, many of whom make suggestions as to what should go in it. Among other things it addresses unjust company firings, the brutal effects of the line speed, and pokes fun at the company's claims that workers could get by on paltry wage raises. As evidence of the need for a decent wage raise the *Workers' Voice* pointed out at the beginning of the last contract, in 2002, gas was \$1.30 per gallon and now workers pay \$3.65 per gallon.

In July 2007, before workers could begin fighting for a new contract, they



Mike Dreyer

Victory celebration Jan. 25, 2008, at the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 789 hall after members voted to keep the union at Dakota Premium Foods.

had to first beat back a drive to destroy their union. An antiunion petition was circulated in the plant leading up to the June 30 contract expiration and company backers succeeded in forcing a union decertification election. The company was confident the union would be defeated. Their strategy included hiring many new workers who are Black, Native American, or white in order to divide them from the mostly Latino workforce.

This boss campaign to decertify the union was soundly defeated on January 25 by a vote of 152 to 82. Workers united against the company in defense of their union. They and UFCW Local 789 union representatives worked together to defend several Black workers who had been unjustly fired and discriminated against.

It was only after the company's union-busting attempt failed that Dakota grudgingly began to negotiate. A dozen workers from different departments participated in the weekly negotiations, joined by union officers and staff members. This went on for several months until union officials organized a vote on the company's May 7 offer. The 116 to 5 “no” vote on the deal sent a clear message to the company.

A few days later the company increased its wage offer. A second vote by the workers was then held. This was organized so that a “yes” vote approved the contract and a “no” vote rejected it

and authorized a strike. The vote of 94 to 51 approved the contract.

Workers know the fight is still on

The *Workers' Voice* distributed in the plant after the contract vote explained that workers were celebrating their fight and accomplishments. At the same time it noted that dozens of workers have faced increased harassment in recent weeks. It further states:

“One of the most important issues remains unresolved—a line speed that injures us daily. The company's drive for profits at our expense means that they will continue to try to up the line speed. . . . We will use our renewed strength to defend our safety on the job.”

The newsletter also calls for solidarity for the workers arrested in the May 12 immigration raid at Agriprocessors meat plant in Iowa. It ends by explaining that the current issue of the *Workers' Voice* starts volume 5, reflecting the new stage in the ongoing fight at Dakota Premium Foods.

Hector Hernández, a young kill floor worker who helped put out the *Workers' Voice* in earlier battles as well as in this most recent fight, said, “The majority of us learned that the bosses only look for their own benefit. They never, never see the work we do. They always look for more production. We learned that when all the workers unite we can win our objectives.”

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‘The best fighter in revolutionary Cuba

Brig. Gen. Arnaldo Tamayo’s remarks at Havana meeting on memoir

The following are remarks by Brig. Gen. Arnaldo Tamayo at an event held during the Havana International Book Fair in February where he presented *Por el dominio del aire: Memorias de un piloto de combate, 1943–1988* (Controlling the Air: Memoirs of a Combat Pilot, 1943–1988), by Div. Gen. Enrique Carreras.

Carreras, 86 and still on active duty, is considered the father of revolutionary Cuba’s air force. As an officer in the air force before the revolution, he opposed the 1952 coup by Fulgencio Batista and became a collaborator within the armed forces of the July 26 Movement, led by Fidel Castro, which was fighting the U.S.-backed dictatorship. He was arrested in September 1957 for taking part in a military plot against the regime. Released from prison with the January 1959 revolutionary victory, Carreras joined the effort to build the air force of the new revolutionary government. An interview with Carreras about his life and his participation in the revolutionary movement is included in *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba’s Revolutionary Armed Forces*, published by Pathfinder.

In his remarks at the February 14 book presentation, Tamayo recounts how Carreras was his teacher when he first joined the Revolutionary Air Force in the early 1960s. Today head of international relations of Cuba’s Revolutionary Armed Forces, Tamayo became famous around the world in 1980 when, as part of the Soviet Union’s space program, he became the first Cuban and first person of African descent to take part in a space mission.

The event also presented *Pombo: un hombre de la guerrilla del Che* (Pombo: a Man of Che’s guerrilla), by Brig. Gen. Harry Villegas, who spoke on the panel. Villegas, known by his nom de guerre Pombo, is executive vice president of the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution. Sergio Ravelo and Iraida Aguirrechu of Editora Política, the publishing house of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, made introductory remarks. Editora Política issued new editions of the two titles, subsidized by the Cuban Book Institute as part of its Special Plan to make books broadly available to the Cuban people (see article on the meeting in



Courtesy Enrique Carreras

“We shot down more of their planes than the total number of planes we had, which was barely seven,” said Arnaldo Tamayo, referring to role of fledgling Revolutionary Air Force during 1961 U.S.-backed mercenary invasion at the Bay of Pigs, which Cuban working people defeated within 72 hours. Above, Carreras in a fighter plane at the time of the invasion.

the March 3 *Militant*).

The translation and subtitles are by the *Militant*.



BY ARNALDO TAMAYO

It’s a difficult task for me to have to talk about Div. Gen. Enrique Carreras Rolas. All the more so here in front of his closest family members, including his children, who know him better than any of us.

Carreras is one of the combatants of the Cuban Revolution who have beautiful and glorious deeds to their credit. He is one of the combatants who have had the privilege of becoming part of history. And not just as a combatant, but because of what Ravelo just described: for his modesty, his simplicity, his total devotion to a cause.

We often hear about combatants who have distinguished themselves in the guerrilla struggle, in internationalist battles, in different areas of defense. But when we speak about the defense of our skies, of the combatants of the air, Carreras must hold a special place in that history. Without Carreras’s story, I believe, it would be difficult to write a history of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba, much less a history of the air force.

I say it’s difficult for me, because we have before us an exceptional figure. As I learned from reading the book, Carreras started in the air force when I was born—he joined the air force in 1941, and I was born in 1942. From that point on he was trained as

a pilot. Many years later I was able to meet him. Later I can tell you some anecdotes about this complex profession of being a combat pilot.

In the course of his professional record Carreras has accumulated great merits, the greatest of which is that he became a complete revolutionary, in every sense. And he did so, above all, in very difficult times, when the July 26 Revolutionary Movement and other revolutionary forces were fighting to overthrow the tyrant. In the book he explains what a blow Batista’s March 10, 1952, coup was for him, even as he served in the professional army. Many professionals of the army and air force were also hard hit by that violation of the constitution and of the principles of democracy.

From then on Carreras began to rebel against the repressive forces and against the tyrant himself. That’s when he linked up with cells of the July 26 Movement and began to cooperate in organizing to topple the dictatorship. As he was doing so, the uprising of September 5 in Cayo Loco in Cienfuegos occurred.¹ He was one of the pilots connected to the July 26 Movement who interceded to get themselves assigned to a mission against the uprising. By doing so they prevented the indiscriminate bombing that was going to be carried out against the people of Cienfuegos, who had joined in the uprising. It was very difficult to determine where in Cienfuegos the revolutionary forces were, since the people rushed out into the street and joined the movement of September 5.

The massacre would have been tremendous. But Carreras and other pilots achieved their aim. Given orders to bomb Cienfuegos, they dropped their bombs and all their murderous shrapnel in the ocean. That’s how his

history as a revolutionary, his cooperation with the July 26 Movement, began.

The regime caught him conspiring, and he was court-martialed. He and a group of conspirators were sentenced to jail on the Isle of Pines, today the Isle of Youth. In prison on the Isle of Pines, he became involved in revolutionary work. They were in jail until Jan. 1, 1959, when the revolution triumphed and he and other revolutionaries were freed.

From that point on Carreras began a new stage of revolutionary activity. He continued his training as a pilot, improving his flying skills and learning new technologies as we began to receive Soviet weaponry.

Victory at Playa Girón

Not to jump over stages in his life, however, shortly before we received the first Soviet planes, Playa Girón took place.² With the few planes we had taken over from Batista’s air force, with the few pilots we had at the time, the revolution confronted the mercenary aggression at Playa Girón.

In the book we see how it happened. In addition to being few in number, the majority of planes they were flying were in very poor condition. There are many stories about how our engineers, our mechanics, our technicians made the planes operational, even using contact breakers from automobiles. And the courageous pilots who achieved this, under these conditions, were headed by Carreras, as leader of one of our air force’s attack groups.

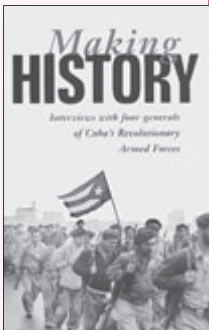
The mercenaries had supremacy not just at sea but also in terms of planes. The proof is that we shot down more of their planes than the total number of planes we had, which was barely seven. Nonetheless, between our artillery and our planes, we shot down 12 of theirs. They acted like cowards—their planes bore Cuban insignia, creating uncertainty among our pilots and artillerymen. At the hour of battle, you didn’t know if you were firing at friend or foe. That complicated things a bit until we figured it out and our pilots came up with signals to identify each other in the air.

Our planes played an extremely important role in the final outcome in the battle of Playa Girón. All this is well told by Carreras here—his participation as well as that of other pilots who risked their lives, not just due to combat but because of the technical condition of the planes. These pilots carried out this important duty to defend the revolution, and we know the results: the mercenaries were defeated in less

FOR FURTHER READING

Making History *Interviews with Four Generals* *of Cuba’s Revolutionary Armed Forces*

Through the stories of four outstanding Cuban generals—Néstor López Cuba, Enrique Carreras, José Ramón Fernández, and Harry Villegas—each with close to half a century of revolutionary activity, we can see the class dynamics that shaped the Cuban Revolution and our entire epoch. \$16



Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs *Washington’s First Military Defeat in the Americas* *By Fidel Castro and José Ramón Fernández*

In less than 72 hours during April 1961, near the Bay of Pigs, Cuba’s revolutionary militias, police, and armed forces defeated an invasion of 1,500 mercenaries armed, trained, supported and deployed by Washington. \$20



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1. On Sept. 5, 1957, an uprising against the Batista dictatorship took place in the city of Cienfuegos in south-central Cuba, led by disaffected forces in the navy, as well as the July 26 Movement. It was quickly joined by working people and youth from the city. Originally intended as a national uprising by anti-Batista forces in the military, the revolt was isolated to Cienfuegos and was quickly crushed; dozens of revolutionaries were killed.
2. On April 17, 1961, 1,500 Cuban-born mercenaries invaded Cuba at the Bay of Pigs on the southern coast. The action, organized by Washington, aimed to establish a “provisional government” that would immediately appeal for direct U.S. intervention. But the invaders, never able to secure a foothold, were defeated in less than 72 hours by the militia and the revolutionary armed forces and police. On April 19 the last invaders surrendered at Playa Girón (Girón Beach), which is the name Cubans use to designate the battle.

a's combat aviation'

ers of Div. Gen. Enrique Carreras

than 72 hours. And Carreras played an outstanding part in that battle.

Later came the period of the development of our air force, with different types of aircraft coming from the USSR. And there was Carreras participating again, organizing and planning the groups of us who went off to study in Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union, China. His recommendations were very important with regard to the requirements for the pilots who were to go study—that they have good reflexes, be in good health.

I remember the first medical exam at the airfield in San Antonio de los Baños at the beginning of 1961. That's when we had the opportunity to get to know Carreras firsthand. He went through the hospital many times, inquiring about the pilots, the young personnel there—17 or 18 years old—who came from the Young Rebels.³ These youth were integrated into our armed forces, enriching our units.

Sense of humanity

There's something worth recalling. In the medical books inherited from the old army, there was an affliction called "repulsive ugliness" that was used to prohibit individuals from flying. Doctors could put down "repulsive ugliness" for someone with juvenile acne, for example. They didn't let many blacks through. Anyone a doctor didn't like, he could put down "repulsive ugliness" and that was enough to bar the person from flying.

Well, Carreras fought those strange concepts. Sometimes there were very good *compañeros* about whom the doctors would put down "repulsive ugliness," and Carreras would go fight with them. I'm telling you this, because one of his qualities was his sense of humanity, which has always been part of his character, his charisma.

Many of us young people went off

3. The Association of Young Rebels (AJR) was a revolutionary youth organization formed in 1959 by the Rebel Army's Department of Instruction headed by Ernesto Che Guevara. It was one of the predecessors of the Union of Young Communists (UJC), founded in 1962.



Militant/Mary-Alice Waters

Enrique Carreras during October 1997 interview for Pathfinder book *Making History*.

to train as pilots in different countries. In one year we were trained as pilots. In accelerated courses, we learned the technical aspects of aviation, the same as the technicians and engineers. We finished the initial part of our schooling in other countries, but when we returned to Cuba in May 1962, as Carreras describes here, the older pilots, beginning with Carreras, became our tutors. Because as pilots we were still rookies. We had learned to land and take off, but it was different learning the combat side—experience in combat aviation, the aggressiveness a pilot must have in the air, among other things.

Many of you know Carreras, he's calm and easygoing. But in the air he was a lion, hunting targets, accelerating at moments of danger, seizing the offensive.

And he instilled these virtues in us, the young pilots. I had the privilege of being with him during the October Crisis in San Antonio de los Baños.⁴ I arrived in May, and by October—thanks to what I and others had learned from him and other experienced *compañeros*—in a few months we were able to assimilate aerial tactics, aerial combat, mastering complex techniques.

Now, Villegas here is someone who really knows something about ground combat. But not all combat is the same. In all combat you risk your life. In the air, however, you don't even need to be in combat to do so. Every takeoff, every landing, exposes you to the same intensity, the same rigor, the same danger. Carreras taught us that. Calmness is also a virtue of his. He is very cool in the face of danger. He talks about that in the book; you'll be able to read it in these pages.

Front ranks in October 1962 crisis

You could see all those attributes of Carreras during the October Crisis. I remember when the commander in chief [Fidel Castro] showed up at San Antonio de los Baños at one of the most critical moments of the crisis, in the middle of the night. He met with all the pilots. He had just given the order that, the next day, Cuban

4. In the face of escalating preparations by Washington for an invasion of Cuba in the spring and summer of 1962, the Cuban government signed a mutual defense agreement with the Soviet Union. In October 1962 U.S. president John Kennedy demanded removal of Soviet nuclear missiles installed in Cuba following the signing of that pact. Washington ordered a naval blockade of Cuba, stepped up its preparations to invade, and placed U.S. armed forces on nuclear alert. Cuban workers and farmers mobilized in the millions to defend the revolution. Following an exchange of communications between Washington and Moscow, on October 28 Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev, without consulting the Cuban government, announced his decision to remove the missiles.



Militant/Ben O'Shaughnessy

Young Cuban military cadets in the audience listened intently to talk by Gen. Arnaldo Tamayo (inset, speaking) at February 14 meeting during the Havana International Book Fair. In his presentation of the book *Controlling the Air: Memoirs of a Combat Pilot, 1943–1988*, Tamayo paid tribute to its author, Enrique Carreras, considered the father of Cuba's Revolutionary Air Force.

troops were to open fire on the planes that were flying over Cuba, scouting out where the strategic missiles were located and what planes we had in the air brigade. By then we had MiGs. The Soviets had a MiG-21 regiment. And there were antiaircraft missiles.

The night the commander in chief arrived we were asleep—we were bivouacked there, of course. The commander told us that by dawn we were to be positioned in our cockpits on the runway, with the planes armed, ready to go into combat.

Clearly the danger was very great. [Raúl] Curbelo, head of the air force at the time, decided that the most experienced pilots—those with Playa Girón under their belts—would be the first to take off, and then us rookies. Owing to his experience, Carreras was in the front ranks of the planes that were to confront that powerful air force. During the October Crisis, this power was shown by the number of exploration flights the U.S. government carried out, not to mention the planes they had in reserve in the event of total war.

Our air force was going into battle at a disadvantage relative to the enemy's numerical superiority. And Carreras, courageously, was in the front ranks of takeoff position number one.

Fortunately the Yankee planes did not fly over Cuba that day, because it would have been a real dogfight. All of us pilots were equally ready to take to the air and give the aggressors the beating they deserved.

That was the October Crisis.

In the following years we increased the air force's technological capacities; we obtained new planes. We received the MiG-15 and MiG-17 fighter jets, then the MiG-21 F-13. Then the next line of planes, the MiG-19; then other variants, the MiG-21 MF, the MiG-23, and finally the MiG-29. Also different types of helicopters and transport planes.

There were few pilots able to master and fly all the types of planes our air force had. One of these was Enrique Carreras Rolas. Few of us had that privilege. Because every plane has its own peculiarities. Each has its own method, its own way of being flown. He became an ace in the Cuban air force.

Later on, because of health problems, he could no longer fly fighter

jets, but as long as he could fly he continued piloting transport planes of different kinds. He felt—and feels—that he is a man of the air, because he's a professional of the air force. I believe he still conducts flights in his mind. He is a man of the air who was born and raised to become one of our heroes who have always defended us, kept our skies blue and clear of any type of enemy aircraft.

For that reason, his participation in the formation of our air force—which became, after that of the United States, the strongest in the Americas—has great value. No Latin American country has, or will have, either the fire power or the courage that our air force demonstrated in Angola, in Ethiopia, and in other countries. Our pilots were in the Congo, in Yemen, and I'm sure all of them carry with them the teachings of Enrique Carreras Rolas, the master of the air.⁵ In one way or another, all of us flew with him. He oversaw us, he watched over us.

I never heard from the mouth of Enrique Carreras Rolas, toward me or any other pilot, a single offensive word. If he had to point out errors in your flight, he'd do it modestly, calmly, and with a tremendous revolutionary spirit.

These are the characteristics of the great man who has written this book. He is the most honest man one could know, the most humble, the calmest, the most decent.

But he is also the best fighter we have known in combat aviation.

5. Between 1975 and 1989, more than 375,000 Cuban internationalist combatants served in Angola, helping to defend that country against a South African invasion and an imperialist-backed insurgency supported by Washington, among others. In 1977 Cuba responded to a request by the government of Ethiopia to help defeat a U.S.-backed invasion by the regime in neighboring Somalia aimed at seizing the Ogaden region. In 1965 Che Guevara led a column of more than 100 Cuban combatants in the Congo to help train liberation forces fighting a proimperialist regime installed with Washington's support. In the 1970s Cuban military instructors trained forces in South Yemen.